





Ho, Kai

REFORM IN CHINA:

BEING

A LETTER

ADDRESSED TO

Rear-Admiral Lord Charles Beresford,

C.B., M.P.

Also

AN ARTICLE

IN REPLY TO

“CHINA: THE SLEEP AND AWAKENING.”



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PREFACE.

MANY suggestions have been made for the Reform of China, and recent events have emphasised more than ever the urgent necessity of radical reform in the administration of this large empire if its integrity as a separate nation is to be maintained. Embodying the joint letter of the Hon. Dr. HO KAI and the Hon. WEI A-YUK to LORD CHARLES BERESFORD, and a reply to the late Marquis Tsêng's magazine article, "China : The Sleep and Awakening," which created considerable sensation at the time of its publication, this pamphlet endeavours to guide public opinion to the cause of China's backwardness, the source from which the danger of disintegration may be said to rise. It is hoped that the warnings herein contained will be appreciated by Europeans and Chinese alike who are interested in the maintenance of Chinese independence and national integrity.

"Sinensis," it may be intimated, is the *nom-de-plume* of the Hon. Dr. HO KAI, whose knowledge of Chinese life and character, literature and history, psychology and mental balance, enable him to formulate, with authority, proposals for the regeneration of China as a nation.



TO REAR-ADMIRAL LORD CHARLES BERESFORD
C.B., M.P.

YOUR LORDSHIP,

We humbly crave Your Lordship's permission to address to you a few remarks on the China question, both in its political and commercial aspects, for the satisfactory solution of which, with noble self-denial and characteristic energy, you have travelled to the Far East, and, while there, have spared neither time nor trouble in making personal observations and gathering useful information. We, together with the leading Chinese merchants and residents, should have approached you during your brief sojourn in Hong-kong, but we were prevented from so doing by two considerations, one of which was that Your Lordship's already limited time was completely occupied with important public and social functions in connection with the British and foreign communities. The other was of a far more serious character, and we venture to think deserves the earnest attention of Your Lordship and of the British Government and Parliament, especially at the present juncture in China. It was the hidden cause of many apparently inexplicable instances of the backwardness of those Chinese who have been accorded the distinguished privilege of becoming subjects of the mightiest and most glorious Empire the world has ever seen; it has prevented their co-operation with the British Authorities in all international questions between the British and Chinese Empires.

It is nothing less than the dread of the Chinese mandarins and the total absence of protection from the British Government that has hitherto kept the British-born or naturalized Chinese from taking openly any intelligent interest or active part in the political and commercial relationship between these two great nations. For some reason or other the Consular Authorities representing the British Government in China have persistently refused recognition and protection to British subjects descended from the Chinese race who happened to be in Chinese territory for travelling, commercial or social purposes, and they are left to the tender mercies of the Chinese officials, who have thus golden opportunities for filling their pockets or paying off old scores.

This policy on the part of the British officials concerned is as enigmatical to us as it is contrary to the practice of the Representatives of other European Powers, such as the French, German, Russian, Portuguese and American, and even the Japanese, who each and all afford the fullest measure of protection to their Chinese subjects in the open ports or the interior of China. The rule of every British Consulate throughout China appears to be to make the granting of protection to Great Britain's Chinese subjects a matter of extreme difficulty, if not of impossibility. They make irksome and in many instances impracticable regulations, and insist upon some stringent and almost impossible conditions. By these means, they effectually block the claim of protection by the great majority, if not all, of their Chinese subjects.

As an example, we may mention the rule of distinctive dress, where it is provided that a British Chi-

nese subject claiming British protection must cut off his queue and change his long-accustomed mode of dress. What the effect of such a rule on the Chinese would be we can safely leave to Your Lordship to imagine, and we need only add that no other foreign nation in China has thought it fair or wise to impose such conditions on their Chinese subjects. The excuse put forward for these unusual proceedings on the part of the Consular Authorities is the fear of international complications. But, as yet, we are not aware of any single case where serious complications have taken place, if we except the numerous troubles connected with foreign Christian missions. On the other hand, even though some insignificant international friction might be caused by extending protection to Anglicized Chinese, would that not be outweighed by the many resulting advantages to British prestige and influence? After this, Your Lordship will not be surprised to learn that the Chinese in Hongkong or elsewhere, being British subjects, should prefer silence to healthy discussion, reserve to active participation, crafty device to manly determination, equivocal support to loyal co-operation. The close proximity to the mainland, the frequent calls of duty or pleasure to the interior, the utter corruption and squeezing propensities of the native officials, their revengeful and arbitrary spirit, the close espionage exercised upon the natives by the Chinese Government, together with the want of protection from the British Authorities, must account for all that seemed cold and indifferent in the Chinese respecting topics of momentous and international interest.

Notwithstanding this, however, Your Lordship's important mission to the Far East and your recent public utterances have aroused universal and intense interest among the Chinese, especially those who are residing in the open ports or under the ægis of the British flag. The policy of "the open door," so ably enunciated and advocated by you, met with their cordial approval and support, as being the only means whereby Great Britain's commerce in China can be preserved and extended, the Chinese Empire kept intact, and her tradal and political relationships with other foreign nations improved. This policy, simple and effective though it be, will, we apprehend, be opposed by the many who deem it to be national glory when a new territory is acquired and a sphere of influence gained, utterly disregarding the dangers and evil consequences that such acquisition may involve. We have, however, the greatest confidence in Your Lordship, and we are assured that the great British public and leading statesmen will readily listen to the wise advice of one whose name is a household word, ability unsurpassed, courage indomitable, judgment unbiassed, public spirit loyal and enthusiastic, and whose discernment, aided by personal experience and observation, is true and unclouded. The issue in the hands of such an advocate will and must be successful in spite of all the opposition that may be interposed.

We believe the active support of the United States of America, of Germany and of Japan can well be counted on, as their interests are identical with those of Great Britain, and they cannot hope to gain any material advantage by the disintegration of China and the restriction of trade in that Empire. We are

certain also that the Chinese will yet fully appreciate the manifold benefits of this "open door" policy, and will do their utmost to assist in its maintenance. They cannot fail to understand that the integrity of their own country, nay, their very existence as a nation, depends upon the firm adherence to this principle. The development of their commerce, industry and natural resources is equally dependent upon its being upheld by the strongest and freest of all nations. Besides, the Chinese people, having great aptitude and inclination for trade, have naturally at all times a particular leaning towards England, the greatest commercial nation in the universe. In addition to this, the justice and liberty that characterise the British laws and constitution, the perfect and impartial protection which Great Britain affords to all who dwell or trade under her flag (with the one exception already alluded to), make her a favourite with the Chinese, so that whenever England should give a clear indication that she will carry out the policy recommended by Your Lordship she will not find the Chinese behind-hand in tendering their support and adherence.

But what support could China give and of what value is her adherence to this policy? Very little, indeed, we admit. As has been pointed out, she has no army or navy worth recognising as such. She is nearly rent asunder by internal dissensions and rival factions. Her officials are the most corrupt and notoriously incompetent; her revenue is ridiculously insufficient, and already overcharged with payment of interest on foreign loans; her land is infested with rebellious bands and lawless mobs; her people are ignorant and full of prejudice and pride. All these

evils, and many more which we at present forbear to enumerate, well nigh render the carrying out of this policy on her soil a matter of impossibility, and seem to force upon the mind of every casual observer the conviction that nothing but actual partition would solve the problem of her future destiny. This, however, was never our opinion, and we are exceedingly glad that Your Lordship, after careful study on the spot, is in accord with us.

Great Britain requires in China the open door and not a sphere of influence, and China needs radical reform and not absorption by any foreign power or powers. But it is quite apparent immediate reformation must be inaugurated. Without reformation the administration of the Chinese Empire will speedily become impossible; partition will become inevitable; and Great Britain will have no choice but to join in the international scramble for spheres of influence. It is also clear that without external aid or pressure China is unable to effect her own regeneration. For obvious reasons, personal gain and aggrandisement, those who hold high office, those who constitute her ruling class, do not desire reform; those in humbler life, forming her masses, wish reform, but are powerless to attain it. In this predicament, we venture to think that England, having the predominant interest in China, and being the country most looked up to and trusted by the Chinese, should come forward and furnish the assistance and apply the requisite pressure. This, we are aware, may be objected to as being a too stupendous task; and beyond the strength of Great Britain; on the other hand, we believe she has the resources to enable her to undertake the work, and

when we recall the magnificent successes achieved in India, and in Egypt and other parts of the world, we are confident that even greater successes will crown British effort and energy in China.

We agree with Your Lordship that China, in order to maintain her integrity and the open door, and to protect property and capital sunk in her vast territory, must have an effective army and police; but we humbly submit that before these desirable objects could be attained some reform in other directions should be effected. We have not forgotten yet what became of the Ever-Victorious Army under General Gordon, or the end of the once formidable fleet under Admiral Lang. We have heard from your Lordship's own lips what ridiculous things have been done in the Arsenal at Foochow, which has been established for a great number of years under foreign direction, and has cost the Chinese Government immense sums of money. We also remember your remarks upon the forts and magazines at Canton and elsewhere in China. Your Lordship has found, as a matter of fact, that certain sums of money set aside by the Chinese Government for particular objects were discovered to be woefully deficient after having passed through the hands of the native officials, whereas, if properly applied, these sums would have been sufficient for the purposes for which they were allocated.

These facts and many more support our contention that China requires something much more urgently than an effective army and police. Supposing it is possible to furnish China to-morrow with a well-disciplined army and a perfectly organised police, we

are quite certain that neither force will be maintained in an efficient state for a year and a day. China's corrupt government and her peculating officials would starve out either or both of the forces. History will repeat itself. It has been pointed out to us that Turkey, although her Government is as bad as, if not worse than, China's, has been preserved to this day by having a good army and a passable navy, and that if we wish to maintain the integrity of the Chinese Empire a large and well-disciplined army is indispensable. But, in our opinion, something else must first be done in order to lay the permanent foundation of a truly useful army, navy and police. If we are to have a reformation at all in China, let it be a thorough one. Let us begin at the very root. We should be very sorry indeed to see China in the position of Turkey, bad as her condition is already. Even with her army and her navy, China would be the continual "sick man" of the Further East; she would be the bone of contention amongst the European powers, the frequent cause of international dispute or even of war. She would become the scene of atrocities, massacres and bloodshed, and the centre of the most abominable and corrupt governments. In fact, she would be, as it were, a large festering sore in the sight of the civilized world. Rather than this, for humanity's sake, we would prefer to see China partitioned at once, and good government introduced by the dividing Powers. National death is preferable to national dishonour, corruption and degeneration.

The urgent reforms before others we would like to recommend for China's adoption are two in number; first, a system of adequate salaries to her officials; and secondly, a thorough overhaul of her system of

collecting her inland revenue, her taxes and crown rents. We recommend further that if China be unable or unwilling to undertake these absolutely necessary reforms, Great Britain, either singlehanded or in conjunction with some other Power, should render China substantial assistance, and, if need be, apply firm pressure on the Central Authorities at Peking.

We earnestly assure Your Lordship that from our intimate knowledge of the Chinese and the Chinese Government, their nature and their ways, it will be absolutely impossible, failing reform in these two particulars, to accomplish any improvement upon her condition; to uphold the policy of "the open door"—by which we understand the maintenance of the integrity of China, the freedom of trade and commerce within her territories, without restrictive or protective tariffs, and the common participation by all foreign nations alike in all the privileges, rights and concessions obtained by any one of them.

Permit us, Your Lordship, to give you some facts in connection with the wretched pay of the Chinese officials and the evils resultant therefrom. It is well known to all of us that a high mandarin in the capital of China, of cabinet rank, does not get by regulation any more than £50 a year as salary. In addition to this, however, he has certain allowances which may possibly make up his whole emoluments to about £200 or £250 per annum. Upon this pittance he is expected to keep up his position, his family, his retinue, his staff, secretaries, advisers, &c., besides entertaining guests and colleagues. In point of fact, he requires from ten to twenty times the amount to meet all his expenses. A Viceroy in the Provinces

has a more liberal salary. He gets as his yearly official salary about £100, and allowances amounting to about £900 to £1,200 more; but, unfortunately, he has to defray out of these sums all his yamen expenses, including stationery, &c., salaries and food to his secretaries, writers, and A.D.C., his body guards and general retinue. In addition to this, he has to entertain his innumerable guests, and send his annual tributes to the various high officials in the capital, to say nothing of supporting his high station, his numerous family and relations. As a matter of fact, to meet all his expenditure he would require no less than £10,000 or £15,000 per annum. A General in the army or an Admiral in the navy gets less than £400 a year as salary, and out of this is supposed to pay for his own personal staff. From these high magnates downwards, the Chinese officials are underpaid in the same proportion, until one gets to the lowest grade, the petty mandarins, whose official pay is scarcely better than that of a well-paid Hong-kong coolie, and the soldiers and sailors, who receive four to ten shillings a month, subject oftentimes to various unjust deductions and squeezes by their superiors.

These generalisations will show Your Lordship that such underpaid officials, both high and low, cannot help but resort to a regular system of corruption and peculation, and, in the struggle for official existence, honour and honesty are impossible. The more fortunate and less scrupulous among them amass fabulous wealth, while those endowed with a little more conscience have to be content with a mere competency, and the upright mandarin, if such has an existence, is forced to retire

after a short experimental career. From this, it can readily be seen why an adequate sum of money set aside by the Government for a definite object is found to be insufficient at the end, or why a sufficient sum of money having been expended no satisfactory results can be obtained ; or why a handsome amount having been paid for superior articles of modern manufacture the most inferior and antiquated objects are bought in substitution.

In short, Your Lordship, ask any independent Chinaman you meet with, and he will tell you the same story, namely, that when a sum of money passes from the Imperial Board of Revenue successively through the various channels to its destination, like a well-known musical scale, it gradually diminishes and becomes beautifully less. With such a system in vogue, how can China expect any reform. All the mandarins in power would naturally oppose any measure for reform tending to take away their illegitimate though, under the circumstances, quite necessary gains. How can she expect her officials to refuse bribery and black-mail when proffered to them by friends or foes ? How can she expect to have a true return of her revenue, and recover the seven-tenths of it which annually goes into the pockets of her officials ? How can she hope to create and maintain a well-disciplined army and an adequate navy when the necessary funds set aside for these purposes are liable to diminution by successive peculations and illegal deductions ? How can she inaugurate and accomplish her public works, such as the different arsenals, docks and the embankment of the rivers when the necessary expenditure is subject to the same

unfavourable influences? How can she make a satisfactory settlement about her *Likin* taxes in their various forms, such as *Loti-shui*, *Cho-li*, &c., when a great majority of her officials look to these sources to eke out their income and supplement their meagre salaries? And, finally, how can she proceed with her railways, open her mines, promote her industries and manufactures, increase her commerce and develop her resources generally, when every official in her kingdom is bent upon making money out of the public funds and revenue, and is resorting to dishonest practices of every description to enrich himself at the expense of the State and its humble subjects.

With the reformation of this unhappy state of officialdom in China, it will be possible for competent and honest men to enter her service and to discharge, honourably and well, the various functions entrusted to them. It will then be easy for her to commence public improvements with some hope of success. Now, as things are, the largest purse will win the day, either in the civil, military or political arena; and such a condition will not suit, in our humble opinion, the honourable, frank and straightforward policy of Great Britain, whereas, on the other hand, it helps the less scrupulous policy of rival Powers. Besides, the reformation in this particular direction will receive the general approval and support of the Chinese, and, we venture to think, of the Chinese officials themselves, most of whom are not without some sense of rectitude. With this reform well in hand, the way would be clear for the next. All opposition from the officials and their underlings hav-

ing been overcome by the raising of their salaries, it will be easier then to put China's revenues in order.

The revenue system of China is notoriously bad. The total revenue received into the Imperial Treasury scarcely represents three-tenths of what is levied by the officials throughout the country. A detailed analysis of the financial arrangements of China would occupy too much time and space, but we refer Your Lordship to the admirable pamphlet written by Consul-General Jamieson on "The Revenue of China," submitted to Parliament in 1897. In this pamphlet, Mr Jamieson has not exaggerated the amount actually collected by China's officials. Rather has he under-estimated the total, and yet from his work Your Lordship will learn that the revenue of China should at least be from three to four times its present amount. This fearful peculation by the Chinese officials, together with the evil habit of the Chinese authorities to "farm" out some of the sources of revenue to minor officials or regular "farmers," renders the Chinese revenue system truly a formidable obstacle to the improvement of international commerce, the increase of local trade and industry, and the development of all her natural resources. Unless the financial arrangements are first reformed, it would be useless to attempt anything for the improvement and advancement of the Chinese Empire. If China could be persuaded by a little gentle pressure from Great Britain to place the collection of her inland revenue, crown rents and taxes, in the hands of a competent establishment, somewhat after the fashion of the Imperial Maritime Customs, it would prove the salvation of China as a nation.

We will not trouble Your Lordship with the other reforms which are more or less necessary to China in her present condition such as the training of an efficient army, navy and police, the opening of technical and scientific schools, the placing of competent and properly-trained men in charge of her Government departments requiring special and technical knowledge, the opening of all her internal waterways and towns to trade, the speedy and economical construction of her railways, and the opening of her mines, &c. But we will be content by addressing you in regard to what we consider to be the root and origin of all her political and commercial evils.

To sum up, we would strongly urge upon Your Lordship, and through you the great British public, that this is the time for prompt and decisive action in China; that the best policy for Great Britain and China alike is "the open door" policy as understood by us in the sense as above described; that this policy, good and sound though it be, requires careful application and bold determination for its enforcement; that previous to or concurrent with the carrying out of this policy the re-organisation of China's fiscal system is absolutely essential; that Great Britain, either alone or along with other Powers, should exercise firmness in getting the Chinese Government to entrust the collection of her revenue to a collectorate similar to the Imperial Maritime Customs; that before this is done (or simultaneously) the Chinese officials, both high and low, should be assured of adequate salaries and pensions commensurate with their various positions in the

Government service ; that while these reforms are on the way the British Government should assist the Chinese authorities in maintaining order within her territories ; and that all other reforms should gradually be introduced hereafter as occasion demands or permits.

Before we close this letter, we would respectfully bring before Your Lordship a matter of some considerable importance, although not generally recognised. We refer to what we consider to be an effective means or the extension of British interests and influence among the Chinese and the promotion of British commerce throughout the empire of China.

We think that there is a mighty force available for the British Government, a force which has been hitherto lying dormant and undeveloped—either willingly neglected or perhaps never dreamt of. That force is the unchallenged commercial acumen of the Chinese. By a proper system of organisation and greater encouragement to British subjects of Chinese parentage, they can be made an arm of strength to Great Britain commercially, and that proud position which she has held in China can yet be maintained despite the rivalry and underhand schemes of her enemies. We humbly suggest that Britain's Chinese subjects be sent to the interior to occupy every possible source of trade and to act as commercial scouts or living channels of communication to the different Chambers of Commerce. Well organised and instructed to make enquiries within their tradal spheres or to penetrate further, if need be, into the interior or any special region, these intelligent merchants may perform wonders and help to maintain the commercial

supremacy of Great Britain. It may be stated as an irrefutable fact that, wherever the goods may come from, whether Britain, Germany, France, America, or Japan, they ultimately reach the Chinese market through those Chinese merchants, who know exactly what is needed and the best mode of supplying the people's wants. They act the necessary part of middlemen between the foreign merchants and the large mass of native consumers. They can visit places where Europeans would only arouse suspicion; they can extract information where foreigners would only close the natives' mouths; where Chinese of the interior would willingly interchange views with British subjects of Chinese parentage and Chinese dress, foreigners would have to be content with vague and evasive answers given grudgingly and with circumspection.

With the support and goodwill of these British subjects of Chinese parentage, with the removal of the *Likin* barrier and other obnoxious Customs' regulations, British goods, assisted by superior carrying powers, can supply the Chinese market, and there would be such a ramification of British commercial interests in the whole Chinese Empire that China, in its entirety, would become a complete sphere of British influence, which, as Great Britain is a nation of free traders, may be considered as synonymous with "the open door." We are hopeful of seeing the day when Great Britain will emerge from this commercial and political conflict with untarnished lustre and unsullied glory.

In conclusion, we beg to offer Your Lordship our sincerest thanks and the thanks of all the enlightened

Chinese for the personal interest and trouble you have taken in the Chinese question ; for your lucid enunciation of the policy of “ the open door,” and for your strong support of the same, which, if maintained, would not only be beneficial to Great Britain and other nations but would confer lasting benefit upon China herself ; and, lastly, for your kind reception of this address, imperfect as it is. On Your Lordship we place our implicit reliance, knowing as we do, that you will champion the cause of commercial and political freedom and liberty with the most distinguished ability and success.

We have the honour to be,

Your Lordship’s humble, obedient Servants,

(Sd.) HO KAI, M.B., C.M., Aberdeen, M.R.C.S.
England ; Barrister-at-law,
Lincoln’s Inn. ; Senior
Member of Legislative
Council, representing the
Chinese.

(Sd.) WEI AYUK, J.P., Junior Member of
Legislative Council, repre-
senting the Chinese.

Hongkong, 20th January, 1899.

' CHINA : THE SLEEP AND AWAKENING.'

[The ably-written article which has appeared under the above title, and which is attributed to the pen of the Marquis Tseng, has attracted a vast amount of attention here and in Europe; and we need offer no apology for publishing the communication given below, in which the views of the former Chinese Minister to London are freely discussed. As may be gathered from the *nom de plume* of the writer, 'Sinensis' is a Chinese gentleman who takes a deep interest in the welfare of the Great Empire in the service of which the noble Marquis is so conspicuous an official; and if the discussion here entered upon should lead the more advanced and more highly enlightened of China's sons—her men of light and leading—to reconsider or to modify their views as to the true road to progress in the Chinese Empire, the object of the writer will doubtless be fully accomplished.—EDITOR, *China Mail*.]

To the Editor of the 'CHINA MAIL.'

February 12th, 1857.

SIR—I read with great interest in your issue of the 8th instant, a remarkable article on 'China—the Sleep and Awakening,' purporting to have been written by the Marquis Tseng, 'which will' (as was there stated) 'appear in the forthcoming number of

the *Asiatic Quarterly Review*.' I do not intend to write exactly a critical review of this truly 'remarkable' article, but I am resolved to take this early opportunity to offer a few humble words in season to the noble Marquis and those who think with him. I have watched over the condition of China with much hope and anxiety. I have long looked forward to her awakening from her lethargic slumber of centuries with eager earnestness. Consequently, the remarks I am about to make are the result of years of study, and with sincerity they are now offered. What heed will be paid to them by those most concerned I know not—much I do not even dare to hope for; but surely the time has come for some one, however insignificant, to attempt the rousing of the all-but-eternal dreamer into activity and to wean her from her chronic state of drowsy oblivion. The task I have set myself is a gigantic one. My poor efforts will prove but drops in the ocean. That may be; none the less I wish to raise my voice with no uncertain sound, and, when opportunity occurs, put my shoulder to the wheel along with those who are more highly gifted than I am.

The first question we have to determine is,—Is the sleeper really awake? The Marquis seems to think that she is, and wide awake too. If so, what are the signs? Here the noble Marquis gives them:—

'Great efforts are being made to fortify her coast and create a strong and efficient navy'; 'China will proceed with her coast defences and the organisation and development of her army and navy, with-

out, for the present, directing her attention either to the introduction of railways or to any of the subjects of internal economy; the changes which may have to be made when China comes to set her house in order can only profitably be discussed when she feels she has thoroughly overhauled and can rely on the bolts and bars she is now applying to her doors.' 'The general line of China's foreign policy will be directed to extending and improving her relations with the Treaty Powers, to the amelioration of the condition of her subjects residing in foreign parts, to the placing on a less equivocal footing the position of her feudatories as regards the suzerain power, to the revision of the treaties in a sense more in accordance with the place which China holds as a great Asiatic power.' 'China has decided on exercising a more effective supervision on the acts of her vassal princes and of accepting a larger responsibility for them than heretofore. Henceforth, any hostile movements against these countries or any interference with their affairs will be viewed at Peking as a declaration on the part of the Power committing it of a desire to discontinue its friendly relations with the Chinese Government.' 'In the alienation of Sovereign dominion over that part of her territory comprised in foreign settlements at the treaty ports, as well as in some other respects, China feels that the treaties impose on her a condition of things which in order to avoid the evil they have led to in other countries, will oblige her to denounce these treaties on the expiry of the present decennial period; China intends on the establishment of manufactories the opening of mines and the introduction of railways.'

This is a full list, and the Marquis is to be complimented on crediting China beforehand with such numerous good intentions. But supposing that China intends all these, and will act up to all her intentions, will she succeed without more? Even if she succeeds in some measure, will she be considered wide awake and conducting her affairs like a man in the full possession of his senses? No. These objects, though all very desirable in themselves, are not to be attained by mere wishes, nor by ill-directed efforts. To China as she is, these objects are part and parcel of her dreams. The exertions and energy which are alleged as being put forward and which she is now presumed to bring to bear, are like the convulsive strugglings of a sleeping man suffering from a night-mare or delirium, utterly illogical and without the shadow of guiding principles. She may chance to hurt some of her neighbouring sleepers or even those who are awake but indiscreetly placing themselves too near and not being continuously on the alert, or, what is more probable, she may injure herself by coming into contact with some substance of unyielding solidity. Put the cart before the horse, and the result is certainly not progression but retrogression. This will be the keynote of my criticism, and I shall endeavour to make good my positions.

None will dispute the vast resources of the Chinese Empire, nor is there any one who doubts the unceasing industry and latent strength of her teeming millions. All the materials essential to the building up of a mighty nation are there and in abundance. At the commencement, however, she requires some wise architects and the laying of a firm and lasting

foundation. What that foundation is or ought to be one has not to go far to seek. It has been, is, and ever shall be the true foundation of every truly great nation. It may be summed up in a sentence, viz., Equitable rule and right government. China can never be what her many well-wishers fondly desire her to be unless she will first cast aside all her unjust dealings with her own children and learn to dispense justice with an impartial hand,—to discountenance official corruption in every form and to secure the happiness and unity of her people by a just and liberal policy. In short, before undertaking anything else, she should look after the all-necessary reforms in her internal administration. She must not wait for another more convenient season, but begin at once ‘to set her house in order,’ even before ‘she feels that she can rely on the bolts and bars she is now applying to her doors.’ **如知其非義，斯速已矣，何待來年。** Bad servants are worse than thieves and robbers, while a united household is in itself a strong bulwark against any external eruption. Of what avail are bolts and bars where, in times of danger, no one is found competent or faithful to attend to them.

Listen to the words of your sages. **天時不如地利，地利不如人和。身修而后家齊，家齊而后國治，國治而后天下平。物有本末，事有終始，知所先後，則近道矣。** They are as applicable now as they ever were.

After such considerations is it strange that I should refuse to accept the signs which the Marquis

gives as indicative of the awakening of China. Until I see China earnestly at work pushing on her internal reforms, and thus striking at the roots of these evils that have beset her for ages,—evils which have made her what she is—so weak, so unmanly—and which were the frequent and sole causes of her numerous humiliations,—I shall not believe that she is really awake, in spite of the improvements in her Coast Defence, her Army and her Navy.

I will support my contentions in a more practical way. I shall point out that, without complete and sweeping reforms in her internal administration, China can never succeed in carrying out these purposes, and that internal reforms must in every case precede, and cannot come after or accompany such otherwise praiseworthy undertakings.

It will not be denied, I think, that the welfare of a nation, especially where absolute monarchy obtains, is very much in the hands of the officials who are entrusted by its Sovereign to rule over his subjects. On these depend in a large measure the happiness, unity and strength of the people under their sway. By their exalted positions, they are mighty to do good or evil to those around them. How does China choose and promote her all-powerful officers? Formerly, years ago now, there was an excellent way. The Emperor and those in authority opened their ears and cast their eyes over the Empire, and when a person was found renowned for *virtue*, talent, learning, ability and experience, he was at once invited to take office, high or low according to his capacity. The invitation was couched in most cordial terms and

almost always accompanied with valuable presents. In case of a person of extraordinary merit it was usual for the ruler to go personally to tender his invitations. But this mode has long since gone out of fashion. It was buried with the sages who ruled over China so successfully. Now there are only two ways of entering the official circle—by literary examinations, and by purchase. Possibly there is a third; but that way is open to many glaring abuses, and is after all more a door leading to promotion than a separate entrance. I refer to the military service
軍功.

The second mode of procuring an official position—*i.e.*, by purchase—is rank and vile, and I need not here discuss its attendant evils at any length, since they must be apparent to every one. The longest purse will win the day, and the purse will become longer at the expense of the people and to their ruination. One can scarcely blame those who have purchased their ranks for enriching themselves still more by preying on their subjects. Have they not invested their capital, and should they not wish or expect handsome returns? Several years ago, it was rumoured that the system of purchase had been abolished; but alas! it exists up to the present day.

The first mode is more reasonable, and on the face of it, seems to conform to modern ideas; but any one who would take the trouble to enquire into the matter, will see at once that these examinations are entirely worthless as a test of real ability and talent. To be successful in these examinations involves no knowledge of modern science or arts. Success

certainly requires a good memory and a close acquaintance with the precepts and sayings of China's ancient sages, most of which are now, unfortunately for poor China, better known than practised. The attendant abuses are numerous and subtle. Money here plays an important part. Favoritism another. Some candidates provide themselves with substitutes, who write for them for substantial considerations; others take into the examination hall large collections of old essays to copy from; while others again ensure their success by resorting to handsome presents. Is this then an effective means of obtaining men of talent and superior qualities? I trow not. Has not the Foochow naval engagement which the Marquis alludes to distinctly proved that it is not? Was not the commander-in-chief of the Foochow fleet a literati of the first water, and was not his knowledge of Chinese Classics intimate, and was not he a scholar who had passed his third literary examination with flying colours and finally admitted a member of the Imperial College? But the defeat was not his fault. He could no more help it than, to use a common phrase, could the man in the moon. Where had he been trained in naval warfare, and where had he got his knowledge of naval engagements? Decidedly not from his Chinese Classics which formed the chief subject of his past examinations. And yet he has been punished for circumstances over which he had no control.

To come to the third mode—Military service. This would be more rational and just were it not for the enormous mass of corruption that surrounds it. Money and not true merit reigns here more than any-

where. Do you want your blue or variegated feather? Fork out your coin, and you shall have it. Wish you to be specially commended for bravery in action? Pay your price, and in due time your name shall appear among the bravest of the brave, though you might have been thousands of miles away from the scene of the battle; or being there, had never fought at all. But then it is not every one's taste or good fortune to be present at a battle, and the rewards to the courageous are not always certain. While I am speaking of China's officials, let me heartily sympathise with every honest man amongst them. His lot is doubtless a hard one. His usual literary training affords him but little help in the discharge of his multifarious and onerous duties, and his salary is starvingly low, so much so as to open many doors to temptation. Moreover, he is continually kept under the iron heel of his official superiors who perchance may delight in nothing save the almighty dollar.

Before I leave this subject I cannot help expressing my pain at witnessing so many of China's choicest sons, who have had exceptional advantages in training and education both at home and abroad, cast away in favour of those who have obtained their official positions in the methods above enumerated, or forced to purchase their rank like the common herd, a necessity with which the more highly-minded among them will never comply, and to which only but few, for reasons best known to themselves, have hesitatingly yielded. What will be the consequence of this illiberal policy no one can tell; but one thing is certain: China by so doing has deprived herself of many good and faithful servants who otherwise would

have served her with loyalty and distinction. ‘尊賢使能俊傑在位則天下之士皆悅而願立於其朝矣.’

There is scarcely a civilized country in the world which needs more than China a really efficient navy and strong fortifications along her coast. But there is something which she is in greater need of, *i.e.*, competent hands to man her forts and attend to and fight her ships. Big guns and forts are all very well in their way, but they are utterly useless against a foe unless they are worked and guarded with intelligence, precision and judgment. Fast sailing cruisers, powerful ironclads and swift torpedo-boats are excellent weapons of defence as well as offence, but they are only tools and demand much skill, bravery, knowledge and experience in their handling. In the hands of the uninitiated and ignorant, they are clumsy and expensive toys—fit only to be sunk or captured by an enemy after a brief resistance. Where will China find all the hands for her Navy without going abroad for them? I am aware that the present order of things is to hire foreign instructors and establish naval schools. Indeed, the Naval College at Foochow was established many years ago, and has from time to time turned out a large number of students, and I will add some promising ones too. But were all the students treated properly, and all promises made to them kept? Were their salaries liberal, and were they punctually paid; and did their salaries suffer much diminution or become beautifully less ere they reached the several recipients' pockets? When the students were qualified, did they get all they deserved, or what had been promised to them? Were they not

put under the same official despotism as the other ordinary officers? Have they not been placed absolutely at the command of and obliged to take directions from ignorant officers who have never been to sea and whose only merit consists in being high mandarins or the relations of such? Have there not been cases of desertion on account of bad treatment received, and have there been no frequent and loud complaints? Here more than anywhere internal reforms are required to induce promising young men to devote their time to the necessary course of study and training, and when qualified to risk their lives and all in the loyal defence of their dear country upon the raging billows. Get an efficient navy by all means, but before all get reform. Take timely warning by the naval encounter at Foochow, where so many of China's ships of war, though outnumbering the French fleet and carrying heavy ordnance, were sunk within the space of barely half an hour. Such a record should make a nation weep and repent in sackcloth and ashes. Just another little question. Under the present regime how much does it cost the Chinese Government to get, through her mandarins, an ironclad valued at say \$750,000? This a nice algebraical problem. Perhaps it can be worked out by x , y and z .

It is now time to direct our attention to China's Army. Here some of my remarks on her navy will equally apply. The Chinese make fine soldiers if properly disciplined and armed, and placed under brave leaders. Let their salaries be paid regularly and adequately according to law, and not cut down and kept in arrears for months together; let their drills be conducted regularly and at frequent intervals by ex-

perienced officers as a matter of fact and not of form; let their arms be of the best and more modern kind, not cheap and rusty old things; let the cartridges for their guns and rifles be of the right sort and size, not ill-fitting; let their officers and generals personally lead them into action, not staying behind miles away on some convenient spot out of harm's way; let their distinguished services and bravery be justly recognised and suitably rewarded without partiality and favoritism; and let no outsiders creep in to divide the glory with them by payment;—then there will be great hope that the soldiers of China will turn out as brave and successful as those of the best European powers. These are the only means by which reform can be brought about, while no amount of talking, severity or compulsion will accomplish the desired end. Does China wish to have an army worthy of the name? Let her then first reform her internal administration in this department. One point I wish to impress especially upon those who have the guidance of affairs is, that the efficiency of an army does not so much depend upon the number of soldiers composing it as in their collective and individual proficiency. Therefore exult not over the 300,000,000 of souls. **受有臣億萬惟億萬心, 予有臣三千, 惟一心.** I cannot leave this topic with recalling to mind the achievements of the Ever-Victorious Army when under the distinguished leadership of that renowned chief, the late lamented General C. S. Gordon.

As to China's relations with foreign powers, it must be admitted that she has much cause for complaint in that direction. She is bound down by treaties to do much that is incompatible with her rights

and dignity as an independent sovereign state. She is often sharply pulled up and rebuked for the least semblance of a breach of an article in such treaties, while some foreign nations are not very careful in observing their parts of the agreements and extremely tardy in rendering justice to her claims. China's sons, too, have not always received that amount of respect and consideration which they deserve, and in some places they have been brutally treated as if they were more devils than men. I deeply sympathise with China in every wrong which she has suffered, and I long with every true-hearted Chinaman for the time to come when China shall take her place among the foremost nations and her people be welcomed and esteemed everywhere. It will be a golden time indeed when China's offspring can stand upon the same equality and enjoy the same freedom and privileges as the inhabitants of the most favoured nations. Let this be the end and aim of all true patriotic sons of China, and I doubt not that the time will speedily come.

While I am thus exhorting let me give a few words of advice. Let those Chinese who have a mind to raise themselves and their nation along with them first find out the true cause of their country's degradation and then apply the proper remedy. Do not rely too much upon the reorganisation of your army, nor the increase of your navy, or upon your new forts and guns, the want of which have without doubt reduced the strength and position of China, but to a limited extent only. The real weakness of China, however, lies in her loose morality and evil habits, both social and political. With the social I have

here nothing to do, since my object now is to deal with the political. Righteousness becomes a nation, but it does more. It is her backbone and fountain of strength. How does this apply in the present case? Let us see. Take a single example. What makes the several Foreign Powers insist upon the violation of the Sovereign right of China to bring every foreign resident within her territory, except the various Ambassadors and their suites, under their law, and to try such offenders in their own courts and mete out punishments in their own way? The Marquis Tseng would say that is because China has not a formidable army and navy; but I would rather suggest that it was owing to the distrust with which Europeans universally regard the Chinese system of law and especially its administration. They hate the very idea of extorting evidence from prisoners and witnesses by infliction of corporeal pain; they detest bribery and unfair dealings; they abhor the filthy prison in which the condemned or even remanded are kept; they shudder at the sound of *ling-chi* and almost faint at the various tortures usually resorted to in a Chinese Court. Does any one think that any Foreign especially European Government will be insane and submissive enough to place their subjects at the mercy of China's Mandarins where such things exist? Never, were China twenty times as strong as she is or stronger. If China wishes to have diplomatic relations with other countries upon an equal footing and desires foreign powers to respect her sovereignty and rights, she must do a great deal more than simply get strong.

To China's decision to exercise a more effective supervision on the acts of her vassal princes and of

accepting a larger responsibility for them than hitherto, I will say little, except to warn her that it is not the wisest plan by any means to accept any increased responsibility before you are ready for it. It will only bring you into more trouble and vexation of spirit. Is it not better for China to learn and adopt the best means for governing her own immediate possessions first, and then extend her influence gradually and by small degrees to her bordering and tributary States?

One important topic I have not yet touched upon. I reserve it for the last, though it is by no means the least. Where is China to find all the funds to pay for her increased armament, to work her mines, to run her railways and to establish and maintain her factories? Her credit is good at present in the foreign market, yet that has a limit, and that limit will soon be reached. When the revenue derivable from the Imperial Customs becomes fully pledged, foreigners will not so readily lend except on the condition that they should have some voice in the control or management of the enterprise for which the money is to be loaned. China will scarcely relish such a condition. She will then be forced to raise a loan among her own people. This is the better way. Nearly every European nation has a national debt in which her people freely invest in spite of the low rate of interest. Why should China not have a national debt also in which her own people can also invest? No reason at all, except that before borrowing from her subjects she has first to establish her credit with them, and win their confidence and trust. But does China possess the confidence of her people regarding money matters? I am afraid not. Witness the re-

cent failure in the attempt to raise a small loan by the Canton authorities. One can hardly wonder at this, seeing the great reputation Chinese mandarins have acquired of knowing too well the value of money, and therefore hard to be made to part with any when once placed in their possession. Some Chinese go so far as to fear that if once they deposit their hard-earned capital with the Government they will never see it again, much less the interest. This is a pity, for I believe there are many wealthy Chinese who could afford to leave with the Government handsome sums and loan at moderate interest. Should the Government have much difficulty in securing sufficient funds to carry out all the contemplated improvements, they might be forced to leave much to be done by private enterprise. This after all is the best way, as has long ago been found out in other countries. But private enterprise will not be undertaken without much encouragement from and confidence in the Government. The least suspicion of injustice, the remotest fear of underhand dealings and undue interference on the part of the Government, such as the levying of blackmail, the imposition of heavy taxes and the assumption of certain injurious prerogatives, would prove fatal to such undertaking. Will the Chinese Government give us some assurance beforehand?

In conclusion, I must apologise to the noble Marquis, for whom I entertain the profoundest respect and esteem, and all my Chinese friends and compatriots, for the very plain way I have written of China, and what I consider to be the evils she is labouring under. Every word has been uttered with

sincerity and without the slightest malice or ill-feeling. If I have erred, I shall be thankful to those who will take the trouble to set me right. If I have, on the other hand, spoken too truly, then let truth have her due weight, and reformation follow as the consequence. I am not without national pride, and I revere the land of my fathers; but I cannot conscientiously go the length of stating that the French restored our invaded territory, when they had got everything they desired at Tonquin and the Province itself, which had for many generations been a vassal State of China. Nor can I say that China made peace in the hour of victory when she had actually lost her ancient tributary State and suffered such crushing defeats at Foochow and Keelung. I must honestly state that although I am apt to be proud with a just pride, I must confess that, had the French not been so half-hearted, and cared to send a few more ships and several extra regiments of picked soldiers, I should have been anxiously concerned for the whole of the Chinese Empire. As it was, I was grateful that everything conspired to ward off the dangerous stroke—thanks to the fatal climate of Tonquin and Formosa, to the brave soldiers of the Black Flag and the half-heartedness of the French nation. It is of no use to hide our defects and defer the remedy. They are like our bodily ailment; the more one conceals, the longer will the appropriate and wholesome treatments be withheld and the more disastrous will this prove to our constitution. The searching touch of the surgeon's probe must sometimes be painful to the patient and trying to the medical man himself, but it is necessary. To know the disease is half the cure. Be this my justification and excuse. Marquis

Tseng did a good service to his country by the publication of his able and masterly-written article in question. The only drawback is that he mistook the effect for the cause, while the cause itself was entirely lost sight of because it was not looked for. Any man may wear a sword and put on a coat of armour, but that does not prove he is a knight, although he may have all the paraphernalia of one. The Marquis should have directed the wanderers to the fountain-head instead of to its various ramifications.

Will the learned Marquis kindly consider the following passages from the Chinese Classics :—

‘王如施仁政於民，省刑罰薄稅斂
可使制梃，以撻秦楚之堅甲利兵矣。’ ‘上
下交征利而國危矣。’ 苟爲後義而先利，不
奪不饜。’ ‘保民而王，莫之能禦也。’ ‘足食
足兵民信之矣 自古皆有死民無
信不立。’ ‘羿善射，羿盪舟，俱不得其死然，
禹稷躬稼而有天下。’

SINENSIS.

To the Editor of the 'CHINA MAIL.'

SIR,—The demand of your correspondent for a translation of the quotations from the Chinese Classics by 'Sinensis' is a most reasonable one. The letter of 'Sinensis' is worthy of a wider circulation and a more enduring existence than any newspaper can give it; and the quotations are of more weighty import than you seem to suppose. Perhaps 'Sinensis' is of opinion that no English translation can do justice to the original; and it is true that there is an inimitable terseness in the Chinese, but there are few readers of the *China Mail* that can see anything in it at all. I therefore send you Dr. Legge's renderings; begging you to give them a place in your paper either with the original or without it.

When arguing that China should not put off internal reform till the measures for defence are carried out, 'Sinensis' quotes Mencius:—

如知其非義斯速已矣何待來年，

'If you know that the thing is unrighteous, then use all dispatch in putting an end to it;—why wait till next year?' Legge, p. 154.

In the same connection he says 'Listen to the words of your sages' and quotes (1.) Mencius:—

天時不如地利，地利不如人和，

'Opportunities of time vouchsafed by Heaven are not equal to advantages of situation afforded by

earth, and advantages of situation afforded by the earth are not equal to the accord of man.' P. 84. (2.) *The Great Learning* :—

身修而后家齊 家齊而后國治 國治而后天下平,

‘ Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families were regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed the whole empire was made tranquil and happy.’ (3.)

物有本末, 事有終始, 知所先後, 則近道矣,

‘ Things have their roots and their branches, affairs have end and their beginning. To know what is first and what is last will lead near to what is taught in *the Great Learning*.’

On the employment of worthy men, the following is quoted from Mencius :—

**尊賢使能俊傑在位則天下之士皆悅而願
立於其朝矣,**

‘ If a ruler gives honour to men of talents and virtue and employs the able, so that offices shall all be filled by individuals of distinction and mark, then all the scholars of the empire will be pleased and wish to stand in his court.’ P. 75.

Advising China not to trust to the vastness of her population, the writer adds the following from the *Shuking* :—

受有臣億萬惟億萬心 予有臣三千惟一心,

‘ Shou has hundreds of thousands and myriads of ministers, but they have hundreds of thousands of

myriads of minds; I have three thousand ministers, but they have one mind.' P. 287.

The concluding sentences are :—

(1.) 王如施仁政於民省刑罰薄稅斂。

'If your Majesty will indeed dispense a benevolent government to the people, being sparing in the use of punishments and fines, and making the taxes and levies light.' *Mencius*, P. 11.

(2.) 使制年以撻秦楚之堅甲利兵矣。

'You will then have a people who can be employed with sticks which they have prepared, to oppose the strong mail and sharp weapons of the troops of Ts'in and Ch'u.' *Ibid.*

(3.) 上下交征利而國危矣。

'Superiors and inferiors will try to snatch the profit the one from the other, and the kingdom will be endangered.' *Ib.*, p. 2.

(4.) 苟爲後義而先利不奪不饜。

'If righteousness be put last and profit be put first, they will not be satisfied without snatching all.' *Ib.*, p. 3.

(5.) 保民而王,莫之能禦也。

'With love and protection of the people, there is no power which can prevent a ruler from attaining Imperial sway.' *Ib.*, p. 14.

(39)

(6.) 足食足兵民信之矣.

‘Let there be sufficiency of food, sufficiency of Military equipment, and the confidence of the people in their ruler.’ *Confucian Analects*, p. 118.

(7.) 自古皆有死民無信不立.

‘(Insufficiency of food might be borne for) from of old, death has been the lot of all men, but if the people have no faith in their rulers there is no standing for the State.’ *Ib.*

(8.) 羿善射, 奭盪舟, 俱不得其死然, 禹稷躬稼而有天下.

‘Yi was skilful in archery and Nagan could move a boat along upon the land, but neither of them died a natural death Yü and Tsih personally wrought at the toils of husbandry, and they became possessors of the Empire.’ *Ib.*, p. 141.

On the 85th page of ‘*The Works of Mencius*,’ are words which ‘Sinensis’ might have quoted very appropriately in reference to the ‘bolts and bars’ which the Marquis Tseng proposes to provide for his misruled country:—‘A people is bounded in, not by the limits of dykes and borders; a kingdom is secured, not by the strength of its mountains and rivers; the Empire is overawed, not by the sharpness of arms. He who finds the Way (道 *Tao*) has many to assist him.’

Yours, &c ,

J. CHALMERS.

HONGKONG, 26th February, 1887.

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